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THE 78TH SESSION OF THE IMPERIAL DIET

-Ministerial Addresses of December 16, 1941-

ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER, GENERAL HIDEKI TOJO

I have been profoundly impressed with the Gracious Message from the Throne granted today at the opening ceremony of the Imperial Diet. In respectful response to the Imperial Wishes, it is my intention to overcome this difficult situation, unprecedented in history, by devoting myself heart and soul to service to State, and thereby to put His Majesty's mind at rest.

At the previous 77th session of the Diet I asked for your cooperation, by frankly laying before you the Government's convictions with regard to the execution of national policies. Since then, the Government had continued their negotiations with the United States of America. As already explained on that occasion, the negotiations were conducted for preventing third Powers from interfering with the successful conclusion of the China Affair which Japan has in view, for making various Powers surrounding Japan not only to refrain from giving direct military menace to Japan but also to remove such hostile measures as an economic blockade against Japan and to restore normal economic relations with us, and also for preventing the European war from spreading to East Asia. Bearing the unbearable and enduring the unendurable, the Government redoubled their efforts to attain the said purpose through diplomatic negotiations. The United States, however, took Japan's patience and prudence for a sign of weakness. She not only refused to listen to Japan's just contentions but furthermore withdrew her original proposals, and in collusion with Britain she submitted her new arrogant proposal to Japan. Details of the American proposal have already been made public by the Government. Three points of the American proposal which Japan could by no means accept were as follows:

- 1) Withdrawal of all Japanese military, naval, air and police forces from China and French Indo-China.
- 2) Withholding of support - military, political and economic - from any government or regime in China other than the Chungking regime.

3) Agreement that no agreement, already concluded with any third Power, shall be interpreted in such a way as to conflict with the establishment and preservation of peace throughout the Pacific area.

In other words, the United States demanded Japan to withdraw all her armed forces from China and French Indo-China, to repudiate the Nanking Government, and to renounce the Three-Power Pact. It became clear that the intention of the United States was to challenge Japan with a rupture of economic relations and military intimidation, and thereby to bring Japan to her knees. Had Japan accepted the American demands, not only the strenuous efforts of Japan for long years in the stabilization of Greater East Asia would have been brought to naught, but also, Japan's very existence would have been jeopardized and Japan's honour would have been lost by being compelled to break her pledge given to her allies for cooperation in restoring world peace. Such a thing could never be borne by Japan under any circumstances. When things came to such a pass, Japan, though ardent in her desire for peace, had no course left to her but to rise up with arms to safeguard her prestige and existence. This is the reason why the Imperial Rescript was issued on the eighth of this month, declaring war upon the United States of America and the British Empire. I am overwhelmed with emotion and inspired by the Imperial Will and Vision. Once hostilities were opened at the Imperial Command, the gallant officers and men of our fighting services have speedily broken through the enemy key positions within less than ten days. The bulk of the American fleet, which had its base in Hawaii, is destroyed. The main body of the British Far Eastern fleet is crushed. The encircling front against Japan, whose strength the enemy has exaggerated and given wide publicity in an attempt to intimidate Japan, is shattered at various places. The Anti-Japanese encircling front is already on the fair way to collapse. These great military achievements have become a wonder of the world, enhancing our Empire's prestige both at home and abroad. This is entirely due to the August Virtue of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor, which is the source of my profound inspiration.

We owe the officers and men of the Army and Navy debts of heartfelt gratitude and unbounded admiration for the demonstration of their great prowess. For years they have been silently going through hard training in preparation for this day. Once war starts, they go to the front, with no thought of returning alive, for the cause of the State.

At the same time I feel keenly that the Government and people on the home front are shouldering increasingly heavy responsibilities. On the outcome of this war depends the destiny of the Japanese Empire. History clearly shows that the Japanese people, when confronted with a great national crisis, get united like one man and successfully overcome all difficulties, by giving full play to their self-sacrificing spirit for the cause of the State, thereby enhancing national fortune. The secret of winning a war lies in an abiding faith in sure victory. I am firmly convinced that the entire nation, in keeping with national polity and recalling the glorious history of the Empire, which has never been sullied with a single defeat in war during its twenty-six centuries' existence, will endure whatever hardships and privations they may have to undergo with unshaken faith in sure victory, and will bring the present war to a glorious termination by performing their duties in their respective functions.

However, our enemies are the United States and the British Empire who boast of extensive territories and abundant resources and by those means are intent on realizing their ambition of holding the world hegemony. It is the task of Japan to settle the disturbances in Greater East Asia and to defeat these powerful opponents. We are prepared that the war will be a long one. We must, therefore, definitely bear in mind that our country will hereafter meet many difficulties, and endeavour to exploit the brilliant successes won at the beginning of the war by increased efforts for the annihilation of enemy forces, and at the same time undertake a grand construction work in all fields embracing various regions of the South which will newly participate in the task, and thereby speedily perfect a structure capable of withstanding such a long-term war. The war remains rather to be fought hereafter. We people should not be intoxicated with individual victories; nor should we worry about any individual phenomena; we must all the more invigorate the inherent spirit of Japan, and help one another in guarding against negligence at home and preventing the infiltration of evil thought from the outside, and thus with a dirm faith in our victory, exert ourselves resolutely to attain the objective of the war with the thought of giving ourselves to the cause of our Empire.

I wish here to express our profound gratitude to our Allies, Manchukuo and China, with which Japan's inseparable relations are evermore cordial, and which have, since the opening of the war, been rendering to us cooperation in

every possible way. It is also gratifying that Japan has previously concluded the joint defence agreement with French Indo-China and has also reached an agreement of views with Thailand concerning the conclusion of an offensive-defensive alliance with that country, and that these two countries are going forward together with us toward the construction of the New Order by further strengthening their collaboration.

That Japan has been obliged to take action at this time in the regions of the South is for no other purpose than to bring to an end the tyrannical policies of the United States and the British Empire and enable all regions of Greater East Asia to restore and develop their inherent character as well as to undertake construction work on a grand scale. It is earnestly hoped that several hundred millions of people of Greater East Asia will understand the real intentions of Japan and, without needless opposition, will participate rather as our partners in the consecrated task of constructing the Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere. It is very deplorable that the Chungking regime is at present still continuing its resistance. If it persists in offering resistance hereafter, Japan will not in the least relax her pressure upon it. As a matter of fact, however, the fountain-head of its power of resistance is now on the verge of complete collapse. A settlement of the disturbances in China is, I believe, forthcoming before very long.

It is a source of mutual gratification at this time that our allies, Germany and Italy, have joined the war immediately after Japan's declaration of war and have, together with us, pledged themselves with an inflexible determination to take all forceful means and never to lay down arms until a victory is won against the common enemies of world peace. They have also agreed with Japan not to conclude an armistice or peace with either the United States or the British Empire without a complete mutual understanding among the three countries and to cooperate more and more closely in future for the realization of a new order characterized by justice and equality. This agreement has resulted in a further consolidation of the bond of alliance between Japan, Germany and Italy. I desire here to express the firm determination of the Japanese Empire never to sheathe the sword until the United States and the British Empire are brought to submission. I also wish to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt appreciation of the enthusiastic display of patriotic spirit of our nation since the outset of hostilities. The budgetary and legislative measures submitted at this session are all confined to matters of urgent nature for the prosecution of the war. I earnestly hope that you will speedily deliberate and give your approval upon them.